



**In Opposition to the Establishment of a Game Season for Gray Wolves in Michigan**  
**Presented by Vicki Deisner, Midwest Legislative Director**  
**Before the Senate Natural Resources, Environment, and Great Lakes Committee**  
**Wednesday, October 17, 2012**

Chairman Casperson and distinguished members of the Senate Natural Resources, Environment, and Great Lakes Committee, on behalf of our approximately 2 million members and supporters nationwide, including over 60,000 Michigan citizens, I want to thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony before this committee. My name is Vicki Deisner, and I am the Midwest Legislative Director for the ASPCA. I look forward to working with you on this and other issues.

Founded in 1866, the ASPCA is the first humane organization established in the Americas and serves as the nation's leading voice for animal welfare. We have a large grants program and thus far this year, we have already awarded over \$77,600 to 10 Michigan communities; last year we provided over \$150,000 to 10 Michigan communities.

The ASPCA's mission is to provide effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the United States, and for that reason **we ask this committee to oppose the establishment of a game season for gray wolves** and say no to the creation of a wolf hunting season in Michigan.

The gray wolf in Michigan was driven to the brink of extinction and placed on the Endangered Species List. On January 27, 2012 the wolf was federally delisted via a congressional rider in a budget bill, instead of through a scientifically based management decision pursuant to the Endangered Species Act. Although the population has increased to a recent count of 687, state management should be undertaken with great caution. Adding wolves to the list of game animals in the state of Michigan will undermine the long term survival of the wolf in our state. Michigan's goal should be the resolution of wolf conflicts with farmers and dog owners, not the hunting of wolves.

Under Michigan's current comprehensive wolf management plan, farmers and landowners are able to kill wolves that attack their livestock or pets. Wolf-related conflicts are often caused by the behavior of a few individual wolves, and management at small scales can often address problems effectively. Michigan's management plan allows for lethal control of wolves when non-lethal measures are ineffective. There is no need for a hunting season on wolves. Despite the recent delisting, **wolves in Michigan have not fully recovered and occupy only 5 percent of their historic range.** The Michigan Department of Natural Resources should maintain its goal of ensuring the long-term survival of wolves in the state by assuring that there is no open season on wolves in the state of Michigan.

The results of a USDA Forest Service study released this year shows that individuals living in the U.S. are becoming increasingly more likely to observe or photograph nature than they are to fish, hunt, or participate in other traditional outdoor activities <http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pub.40453>. The hunting community represents a small percentage of the general population. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources reported that all hunting license sales have been trending downward for the last ten years. In 1992 1.1 million people purchased hunting licenses nationwide. That number has since dropped to about 780,000. Thus the number of people nationally that want to photograph and enjoy wildlife is rising whereas the number of people that want to hunt wildlife is decreasing.

In 2010, Michigan State University conducted a statewide public opinion poll and found that a large majority of Michigan residents, 82 percent, value the presence of wolves being in Michigan. Further, in response to this poll, the citizens of Michigan have made it clear that most, 86 percent, do not want to hunt wolves, and 78 percent felt that hunting should only occur if the biologist believed the wolf population can sustain a hunt. In addition a majority of all Michigan residents felt that hunting of wolves in Michigan should only occur if first approved by the voters.



For all of these reasons, The ASPCA respectfully urges the Senate Natural Resources, Environment, and Great Lakes Committee to oppose the establishment of a game season for gray wolves in Michigan. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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